



Your Health Guidebook



International Rescue Committee
Maryland's Health Program

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1. Introduction to Good Health

Welcome to the United States. Welcome to Maryland.

We are happy you have arrived.

This guide will help you understand health and medical care in the U.S.



2. Prevention

What is **Prevention**?

To prevent is to stop something from occurring.



- To prevent getting wet in the rain, use an umbrella.



- To prevent food from rotting, put food in the refrigerator.



- **To prevent illness, visit the doctor.**

3. Preventative Health Care

Preventative Health Care is regular medical care and healthy behaviors to avoid illness and disease.

Types of Preventative medical appointments:

- Initial Health Screening (Resettlement Health Visit)
- Immunizations
- Routine Medical Exams
 - Yearly Physical Exam
 - Well Woman Exam
 - Well Child Exam



4. Health Insurance

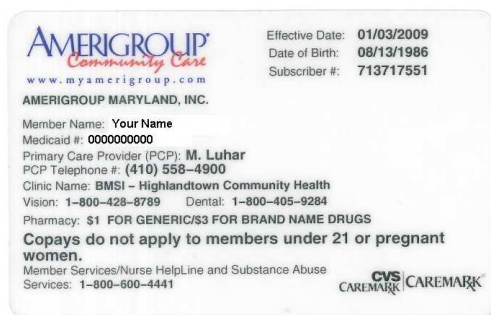
Health Insurance helps to pay for the cost of medical care:

- Appointments with Doctor
- Medicine
- Hospital Visits, Operations

Health Insurance pays for some or all of your **Medical Bills**.

You will have an **Insurance Card**.

Bring your insurance card each time you visit the doctor, pharmacy or hospital.



For your first 8-months in the U.S., your health insurance will be provided by Maryland Medical Assistance and HealthChoice.

Your Case Manager will help you choose a **HealthChoice Health Plan**/insurance (sometimes called a Managed Care Organization or MCO):

- Amerigroup
- Maryland Physicians Care
- Priority Partners
- United Healthcare

In your 9th month, you will need to apply for new health insurance.

Your Case Manager will provide you with information to help you apply for the best health insurance for you and your family.

5. Your Doctor



In the US, you will have your “own” doctor or “family doctor”.

This doctor is called your **Primary Care Provider (PCP)**.

You will see your doctor if you are sick.

You will also see your doctor when you are healthy, for preventative medical appointments.

- Examples: well woman exams, well child exams, routine exams, or immunization appointments.

You will visit your Primary Care Provider first, for most of your health issues.

6. Specialists

A **Specialist** is a doctor with more expert knowledge about specific health issues or areas of the body.

- When you need an operation, you will visit a *Surgeon*.
- If you are a woman or are having a baby, you will visit an *Obstetrician/Gynecologist (OB/Gyn)*.
- If you have children, they will visit a *Pediatrician*.
- When you need to examine your heart, you will visit a *Cardiologist*.

Your Primary Care Provider will give you a **referral** if you need to visit a specialist.

- A **Referral** means you have permission to visit another doctor.
- A **Referral** is usually a document or letter that you must bring to the Specialist.

You **do not** need a referral from your Primary Care Provider to visit these Specialists:

- Dentist
- Eye Doctor (Ophthalmologist or Optometrist)
- Mental Health Provider (Psychiatrist or Therapist)



7. Medicine

1. Prescription Medicine

If you need medicine, your doctor will give you a **Prescription**.

- A **Prescription** is a piece of paper with the name of the medicine.

You will go to a **Pharmacy**.

Give your prescription to the **Pharmacist**.

The pharmacist will give you the medicine.

This medicine is usually paid for by health insurance. Health insurance will most often pay for the generic, less expensive version of medicine

Many medicines have more than one name.

2. Non-Prescription Medicine / Over-The-Counter Medicine

You do not need a prescription to buy some medicine:

- For headache
- For stomach ache
- For cough or cold
- For cuts



You can buy this medicine at the pharmacy or grocery store.

This medicine is not usually paid for by health insurance. You may have to pay with money.

Some health insurances have special programs to get the generic version of non-prescription medicine for free.

- For example, your insurance may pay for “Ibuprofen” (generic) form of Advil (brand).

Ask your case manager or doctor about these programs.

Instructions for Medicine

Medicine can be a pill or a liquid.

The doctor or pharmacist will tell you how to take your medicine.

You should know:

- How many pills/liquid to take
- How many times each day
- What time during the day to take your medicine
- How many days or weeks to take your medicine

If you need to take medicine for a long time, the prescription may have **Refills**.

Refill - the pharmacist will give you more medicine without a new prescription from your doctor.

- Note how many Refills listed on your medicine bottle
 - This is the number of times you can get new medicine without visiting your doctor.
- If you have 0 refills and need to take more medicine, see your doctor.
- Your doctor may give you a new prescription for more medicine.



Diagram illustrating the components of a prescription label with callouts:

- Pharmacy name and address
- Number used by the drugstore to identify this drug for your refills
- Person who gets this drug
- Instructions about how often and when to take this drug
- Name of drug and strength of drug
- Number of refills before certain date
- Doctor's name
- Drugstore phone number
- Prescription fill date

Local Pharmacy
123 MAIN STREET
ANYTOWN, USA 11111
(800) 555-5555

DR. C. JONES
DATE 06/23/09

NO 0060023-08291

JANE SMITH
456 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN, US 11111
TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 10 DAYS UNTIL ALL TAKEN

AMOXICILLIN 500MG CAPSULES

QTY NO REFILLS - DR. AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED
MRG USE BEFORE 06/23/12
SLF/SLF

Don't use this drug past this date

8. Medical Appointments

How do you schedule an appointment with your doctor?

- Call or visit the clinic or doctor's office
- You will need to tell them your information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone Number
 - Date of Birth
 - Social Security Number
 - Health Plan/Insurance
 - Name of your doctor
 - Why you need to visit the doctor
- Ask for an **Interpreter** in your language
- Ask if your health insurance is accepted
- Ask if you will need to pay any money for your appointment

Important Information about Medical Appointments

- Use a calendar to record all medical appointments for you and your family
- Arrive 30 minutes early
- Bring photo ID, Insurance Card and any **Referrals**.
- **Always** ask for an interpreter if you need one.
- If you cannot go to your appointment, you must call to cancel your appointment 24 hours before scheduled appointment time
- A family member or friend may join you during your appointment

What Happens During a Medical Appointment?

- Your height, weight, temperature and blood pressure is checked
- A Doctor or Nurse will ask you questions about your health and the health of your family
- You may need to give a blood sample or urine sample
- **If you have questions or worries about your health or the health of your family, ask your doctor**

9. Immunizations



Immunizations (or vaccinations) prevent illness.

Immunizations are injected into the body through a needle and contain medicine

All infants, children and adults need to get immunizations.

You will receive many immunizations.

You may have received immunizations overseas, and you will receive more immunizations in the US.

It is important to keep a record of yours and your family's immunizations.

Use a calendar to record the dates of all immunizations.

Never miss an immunization appointment!

10. Blood Sample

Sometimes, your doctor will need “blood”

This is called a **Blood Sample**.

The blood will be tested to look for illness.

A doctor or nurse will take blood from your arm through a needle.

A special doctor will test it.

Your doctor will tell you the results, although this may take some time..



11. Urine Sample

Sometimes, your doctor will need “urine”

This is called a **Urine Sample**.

The urine will be tested to look for illness.

The nurse will give you a container.

You will go to the bathroom.

You will urinate into the container.

You will take it to the nurse or doctor.

A special doctor will test it.

Your doctor will tell you the results, although this may take some time.



12. Stool Sample

Sometimes, your doctor will need “stool”

This is called a **Stool Sample**.

The stool will be tested to look for illness.

The nurse will give you a container.

You will go home.

You will go to the bathroom.

You will put a small amount of stool into the container.

You will take it to the nurse or doctor.

A special doctor will examine it under a microscope.

Your doctor will tell you the results, although this may take some time.



13. Types of Healthcare

Preventative Care

- Routine medical care or treatment to prevent illness or injury.

Follow-Up Care

- Additional medical appointments with your doctor for more medical treatment or to review tests.
- Future appointments will usually be scheduled before you leave the office.
- Be sure to note the date and time of your next appointment.

Urgent Care

- Immediate medical care for an illness or injury (i.e. sprain, sore throat or rising temperature)
 - **If you become ill or injured, schedule an appointment with your Doctor.**
 - Appointment can usually be scheduled within 24 hours or just a few days.

Emergency Care

- Immediate medical treatment for a life-threatening medical condition or painful symptoms
 - **Go to the Emergency Department at the nearest hospital, or dial 9-1-1 if you are unable to go to the hospital.**

14. Clinic



A **Clinic** is a health care center where you receive routine preventative care when you are healthy or visit your Doctor/Primary Care Provider when you are sick.

A clinic is smaller than a hospital where patients are less sick and do not stay overnight.

You will go to a clinic or Doctor's office to see your Primary Care Provider/Doctor.

- For routine medical appointments
- For appointments when you feel sick
- For immunizations

You should schedule an appointment to visit your doctor at the clinic.

15. Hospital

You may need to go to a **Hospital** for some health issues:

- For Emergencies
- For an appointment with a Specialist
- For specific medical treatment

For Example:

- Surgery/Operation
- If you are having a baby

Your **Doctor** /Primary Care Provider will refer you to the Specialist or Hospital.

If it is an Emergency, go directly to the hospital.



16. Health Emergencies

What is an **Emergency**?

An **Emergency** is a serious problem that must be treated **immediately**, or it will get worse or your life/health is in danger:

- If you break a bone
- If you are having a heart attack
- If it is difficult to breath



What to do in case of an emergency

- Go immediately to the nearest Hospital
 - Visit the **Emergency Department**
 - An **Emergency Doctor** or **Nurse** will treat your emergency

- If you are unable to travel to the Hospital
 - Call **9-1-1**

You will be asked for your:

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Address
- ✓ Phone Number
- ✓ What is the emergency/problem



- An ambulance will come to your home.
- Emergency Medical providers (EMT) will talk to you about your health problem.
- The ambulance may drive you to the hospital if you need immediate medical care.

Always bring your Health Insurance card to the Hospital.

17. Important Phone Numbers

Emergency Phone Number: **9-1-1**

Clinic: _____

Primary Care Provider / Doctor: _____

Hospital: _____

Pharmacy: _____

Eye Doctor: _____

Dentist: _____

Case Manager: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

18. Glossary

Clinic	A health care center where you receive routine preventative care when you are healthy or visit your Primary Care Provider/Doctor when you are sick.
Emergency	A serious problem that must be treated immediately, because your health or life is in danger.
Emergency Department	Area of hospital where health emergencies are treated.
Health Insurance	A program that helps to pay all or part of healthcare costs, such as costs of doctors' appointments, medicines, and hospital visits.
Hospital	A health care facility where patients receive urgent or emergency care, where very sick patients may stay overnight.
Immunization	(Vaccination) An injection which allows the body to avoid certain illness and disease.
Medical Bill	Statement of money to be paid for medical care received.
Pharmacy	Health facility where you receive prescription medicine.
Primary Care Provider (PCP)	The doctor you will see first for routine preventative care when you are healthy or urgent care when you are sick
Prescription	The form your doctor will give you if you need medicine.
Preventative Care	Routine medical care and healthy behaviors to avoid illness and disease.
Referral	A document or letter from your Doctor/Primary Care Provider (PCP) which gives you permission to see a Specialist.
Refill	When you are able to receive more medicine from the pharmacy, without a new prescription from your doctor.
Specialist	A doctor with more expert knowledge about specific health issues or areas of the body.

19. Adult Immunization Schedule

ADULT IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE		IMMUNIZATION DATES		
VACCINE	NUMBER OF SHOTS	NOW	1 MONTH	6 MONTHS
Hepatitis B (HBV)	3	✓	✓	✓
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	2	✓	✓	
Varicella (Chickenpox)	2	✓	✓	
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP, Td)	3	✓	✓	✓
Polio (IPV)	3	✓	✓	✓
Pneumococcal	Every 7-10 years	✓		
Influenza	Every year	✓		

- You must complete certain immunizations to get your Green Card
- It may take 6 months to receive all of your immunizations

Children must also complete certain immunizations. Your child's doctor will tell you which immunizations are necessary and when they will be scheduled.

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DtaP)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)
- Pneumococcal (PCV)
- Polio (IPV)
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal

20. Well Child Exam Schedule

Well Child Exam – monitors your child's growth, development and immunizations

Age of Child	Date of Exam
1 week	
2 weeks	
2 months	
3 months	
4 months	
6 months	
9 months	
12 months	
15 months	
18 months	
2 years	

Children older than 2 years are scheduled for a Well Child Exam once every year



21. How to Schedule An Appointment by Telephone

You say: Hello, my name is _____.
I am a new patient with Dr. _____.
I would like to make an appointment please.

Clinic: *Certainly. What is your health insurance?*

You say: I have _____. (Amerigroup, Priority Partners, Maryland Physicians Care, United Healthcare, Medicaid)

Clinic: *Why do you need to visit the doctor?*

You say: I am sick with _____ and need to visit a doctor soon
-or-
I would like to schedule a wellness check-up.

Clinic: *OK. When can you come in?*

You say: Do you have any open appointments on _____ (date)?

Clinic: *Yes, I can give you an appointment on _____ (date) at
_____ (time).*

You say: What do I need to bring with me?

Clinic: *Bring your health insurance card, Medical Assistance card, photo ID, and any medical records you may have.
Please come 30 minutes early.
See you on _____ (date).
Good-bye!*

You say: Okay, thank you! Good-bye!

22. Personal Health Information

LIST OF CURRENT MEDICINES	

FAMILY HISTORY OF ILLNESS / DISEASE	
FAMILY MEMBER	TYPE OF ILLNESS / DISEASE

23. Record of Healthcare

[illegible]

24. Sources

Adapted from:

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